

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASUNCION 000807

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA A/S NORIEGA, PDAS DERHAM, DAS JEWELL; WHA/PD  
(GOULD); R/PPR (WHITAKER)  
STATE ALSO PASS TO USAID ADMINISTRATOR NATSIOS; LAC/AA  
FRANCO  
NSC FOR MIKE DEMPSEY, TOM SHANNON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [PA](#)

SUBJECT: Paraguayan Media Focuses on Chavez Barbs at US and  
Venezuelan Oil Deal

11. SUMMARY: News coverage of the 06/20 speeches of  
Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez at the Paraguayan Congress  
and the National University focused on comments attacking  
the United States and Chavez' interpretation of the benefits  
of an anticipated Venezuelan/Paraguayan oil deal. Coverage  
in newspapers was extensive and TV covered the speeches, at  
least in part, live, as did news radio channels. END  
SUMMARY.

U.S. BASHING

12. In his 6/20 visit to the Paraguayan Congress, Chavez  
spoke for about three hours in which he insisted that Latin  
American countries should break up with "imperialist  
domination," especially with the U.S. and build a new model  
of development based on national projects where the  
priority, among other things, is the recuperation of the  
natural energy resources which are in the hands of  
multinational companies. Chavez criticized heavily  
President Bush and referred to him as "Mister Danger" --  
accusing him of being a danger to humanity.

13. In this speech, he also referred to 9/11 -- describing a  
book written by "a man" who recounts his experience after he  
visited the place where the Twin Towers were destroyed and  
how he became aware of what he had done in his life. Chavez  
said this man called himself an "economic assassin" and  
realized that the planes that crashed were a result of the  
"American century." Chavez said that, in a way, this is a  
response, a response he does not agree with, but somehow a  
response to Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Afghanistan, Iraq,  
Fallujah, Panama, Dominican Republic, Guantanamo, etc.

14. In separate comments at the end of the Mercosur Summit,  
Chavez was quoted by several newspapers as saying "Whoever  
wants to see hell, should take the path recommended by  
Washington," apparently in response to positive comments by  
Colombian President Uribe.

15. In "La Nacion," Paraguay's third-largest and business-  
oriented daily, Chavez was quoted as saying that "Capitalism  
is the devil itself and its paths lead to hell." The paper  
noted negative remarks about U.S. economic policy and the  
use of nicknames referring to President Bush were cheered by  
the audience during the speeches at the Congress and  
University. (Note: The audience at the Congress included  
many guests from outside Congress -- including the Cuban  
Ambassador to Paraguay and members of campesino groups.) At  
the university, Chavez said that, like him, Castro feels  
young because he continues believing in the revolution and  
in fighting against the system imposed from the "empire," as  
he called the U.S.

Oil for ???

16. Major attention was also paid in the media to Chavez'  
comments about the benefits of a deal for inexpensive oil to  
Paraguay via a special credit granted by his government to  
Paraguay.

17. "ABC Color," Paraguay's largest and most influential  
daily, under the title "The trickery of the Venezuelan  
President" in its lead editorial on 06/21 said: "...This is  
simple sophistry from Chavez ... If he really wanted to help  
Paraguay, Chavez would have authorized blank credit to  
advance education and public health -- not for the purchase  
of oil that the state monopoly, Petropar, commercializes in  
the internal market.... The silent majority of the  
population, honest and hardworking people who love their  
country and want to see an end to backwardness, poverty and  
defeat, as well as the politicians who still have a minimum  
of patriotism, should be alert and firmly reject this  
trickery of Hugo Chavez, who only seeks to acquire influence  
over Paraguayan politics and economy through our dependence  
on financed oil."

Almost On The Air and Almost Not in Print

18. In media reports, Chavez also announced that cable channel TEVESUR will launch in August as a Latin American alternative to CNN.

19. A "chavista" show in a bar downtown is the title of an article run by "ABC Color." Chavez entered a downtown bar with a group of people. A photographer from ABC snapped a photo of Chavez. One of the Venezuelan president's security guards grabbed the photographer's press credential and demanded the photo chip. The reporter took refuge with other people from the newspaper nearby and eventually the guard returned the credential when they had to admit that Chavez was in a public place and it was not an official act restricted to media photo ops only.

COMMENT

-----  
110. Chavez' knack for spicy material for the media guarantees him coverage in sensation-loving Paraguayan media. At the same time, the media recognize his tendencies, referring to him as 'noisy' in the gossip columns and in the one editorial published to date concerning his remarks, as full of trickery. END COMMENT.  
JOHNSONKEANE